SECOND REPORT | SECOND SESSION | THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

Annual Review of the Budgets of the Independent Legislative Offices

Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

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December 8, 2010

To the Honourable
Legislative Assembly of the
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the Second Report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the second session of the 39th Parliament.

The Second Report covers the work of the Committee related to its annual review of the budgetary estimates of the independent legislative offices.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

John Les, MLA
Chair

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Composition of the Committee

Members

John Les, MLA	Chair	Chilliwack
Doug Donaldson, MLA	Deputy Chair	Stikine
Norm Letnick, MLA		Kelowna – Lake Country
Don McRae, MLA		Comox Valley
Michelle Mungall, MLA		Nelson – Creston
Bruce Ralston, MLA		Surrey – Whalley
Bill Routley, MLA		Cowichan Valley
John Rustad, MLA		Nechako Lakes
Jane Thornthwaite, MLA		North Vancouver – Seymour
John van Dongen, MLA		Abbotsford South

Clerk to the Committee

Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk Assistant and Acting Clerk of Committees

Research Staff

Josie Schofield, Manager, Committee Research Services

Kathryn Butler, Morgan Lay, Byron Plant, Polly Vaughan, Committee Researchers

Terms of Reference

On May 27, 2010, the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered:

2. a) To consider and make recommendations on the annual reports, rolling three-year service plans and budgets of the following statutory officers:

    i. Auditor General

    ii. Chief Electoral Officer

    iii. Conflict of Interest Commissioner

    iv. Information and Privacy Commissioner

    v. Merit Commissioner

    vi. Ombudsperson

    vii. Police Complaint Commissioner

    viii. Representative for Children and Youth; and,

    b) To examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to other matters brought to the Committee's attention by any of the Officers listed in 2(a) above.

3. That the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be the committee referred to in sections 19, 20, 21 and 23 of the Auditor General Act and that the performance report in section 22 of the *Auditor General Act* be referred to the committee.

In addition to the powers previously conferred upon the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, the committee shall be empowered:

a. to appoint of their number, one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Committee;

b. to sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;

c. to adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and

d. to retain personnel as required to assist the Committee,

and shall report to the House as soon as possible, or following any adjournment, or at the next following Session, as the case may be; to deposit the original of its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly during a period of adjournment and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, the Chair shall present all reports to the Legislative Assembly.

Introduction

This Report summarizes the tenth annual review conducted by the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the Finance Committee) of the budgets and workplans submitted by the officers heading the independent legislative offices. Since reporting last fall, there have been several changes relating to the statutory officers, which are summarized below.

Statutory Officers Review Panel

On March 3, 2010, Speaker Barisoff announced the establishment of a three-member Panel to conduct a review of the mandates of the eight statutory officers in British Columbia. On April 15, 2010, the Panel presented its confidential report to the Speaker, who referred it to the all-party Legislative Assembly Management Committee for consideration.

New Merit Commissioner

As noted in last year's report, the appointment of a successor to Joy Illington, the province's first Merit Commissioner, was pending. On December 18, 2009, an all-party Special Committee unanimously recommended that Fiona Spencer be appointed as the next Merit Commissioner. Her appointment was approved by the Legislative Assembly on February 9, 2010.

New Information and Privacy Commissioner

On January 19, 2010, David Loukidelis left his position as Information and Privacy Commissioner to become Deputy Attorney General. An all-party Special Committee was appointed and selected Elizabeth Denham as the province's third Information and Privacy Commissioner. Her appointment was ratified by the House on May 6, 2010. During the transition period, Paul Fraser, QC, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner served in an acting capacity.

Acting Chief Electoral Officer

On May 6, 2010, the Legislative Assembly appointed an all-party Special Committee to select and unanimously recommend to the House the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer to succeed Harry Neufeld whose term ended on June 4, 2010. The Government House Leader advised the Legislative Assembly on June 3, 2010 that Craig James, Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees, had agreed to serve as Acting Chief Electoral Officer until such time as a permanent Chief Electoral Officer is appointed.

Move to Shared Accommodation

In correspondence, dated October 13, 2010, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Merit Commissioner, Ombudsperson and the Police Complaint Commissioner provided an update to the Finance Committee on the acquisition of shared office space at 947 Fort Street, Victoria. They reported that construction of the office building had been completed on schedule, and that the move into the shared accommodation was scheduled for October 25, 2010.

Meetings Schedule

To conduct its annual review, the Finance Committee scheduled public meetings in Victoria on November 23 and 24, 2010 with the eight statutory officers. On November 24, the Committee also met in-camera to deliberate on the recommendations to be presented to the Legislative Assembly.

November 23, 2010	Acting Chief Electoral Officer
	Conflict of Interest Commissioner
	Police Complaint Commissioner
	Information and Privacy Commissioner/Lobbyists Registrar
	Merit Commissioner
November 24, 2010	Ombudsperson
	Representative for Children and Youth
	Auditor General
	Deliberations

Minutes and transcripts of the Finance Committee's public meetings, as well as an electronic copy of this report, are available through the parliamentary committees' website at: www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/.

Office of the Auditor General

> *"[B]ecause of internal efficiencies and new IT tools…the amount of money that I am requesting is actually not half a million dollars or anything near it. It's a mere $352,000."* (John Doyle, Auditor General of British Columbia)

Background

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) serves the people of British Columbia and their elected representatives by conducting independent audits and advising on how well the government is managing its responsibilities and resources. Vote 2 of the annual *Estimates* provides for the Office's operating expense and capital expenditures. Last year, the Finance Committee recommended that the annual operating budget be $15.4 million in each of the next three fiscal years, and that the annual capital budget be set at $150,000 during the same time period.

2011/12 Estimate of Resources

On November 24, 2010, the Finance Committee met to review the Office's estimate of resources for the next fiscal year. Appearing on behalf of the OAG were John Doyle, Auditor General; Malcolm Gaston, Assistant Auditor General; and Katrina Hall, Manager of Finance.

The Auditor General began the presentation by outlining the demographic challenges facing the Office. While it is still the case that about a quarter of the senior staff will retire within the next five years, the Auditor General reported that he is now starting to see a critical mass of junior staff working their way up to manager level. He expects that in the next few years the Office will have the internal resources to be able to replace senior staff as they move into retirement.

Other challenges facing the Office are the emerging accounting standards. The Auditor General informed the Finance Committee that every organization in the government reporting entity, outside of core government, will be changing its basis of accounting and financial reporting in the next two years. For example, schools, universities, colleges and hospitals (SUCH sector) will move to Public Sector Accounting Board standards, with changes to the not-for-profit accounting standards. This will increase the quantum and cost of work for the OAG during the transition.

Turning to the estimate of resources for 2011/12, the Auditor General requested $352,000 (or a 2.3% lift) in the annual operating budget for items such as salary increments and building occupancy charges. He also reported that as a cost-saving measure, digital telephony has been installed in the Office during the past year.

Finally, the Auditor General requested a $100,000 increase in the capital budget for upgrading the Office's information technology and infrastructure needs (e.g., three-year computer replacement strategy and work space costs for staff).

Committee Inquiry

The committee inquiry focused on the OAG staff development plan; the operating budget; and the capital budget. One Member also asked for clarification of the not-for-profit accounting standards.

Staff development plan

The Finance Committee was interested to learn more about the Office's staff development plan for tackling the demographic challenges, and inquired if it would be applicable to other offices. In response, the Auditor General elaborated on the strategy he had developed in 2007 to deal with the imminent retirement of a number of senior people with decades of experience. He reported to the Committee that he had opted to increase training from within, and at every level there are now training and development programs to assist people to move up the ranks within the Office. This curriculum will be circulated to other audit offices by CCAF, a national research foundation.

Operating budget

Salaries

Members asked about the $134,000 increase in salaries and benefits. They were informed that this comprises increments for employees promoted as part of the staff development plan. There are no across-the-board increases planned for staff, and no plans to hire new FTEs.

Occupancy costs

The Finance Committee also asked about the $50,000 increase in occupancy costs. The Auditor General reported that the higher costs arise simply because of a readjustment of the rental contract with ARES, the government's Accommodation and Real Estate Services division. He also mentioned that the Office has considered moving, but the actual average cost of space in its current location is lower than anywhere else in the provincial capital.

Travel costs

Another line of questioning focused on the estimate for travel costs ($537,000) and in particular, how much would be spent on travel within the province and how much outside BC. The Auditor General reported that for the most part, travel is not a discretionary expense since staff is required to conduct direct inspection of records and interact with auditee staff, spending weeks away from Victoria. Travel outside the province includes two national conferences, which usually go for two to four days each. There can also be other conferences that staff attend, when the subject is specific to a particular body of work the Office is conducting.

IT expenses

Members also asked questions about the proposed increase of $98,000 in operating information-technology expenses. They learned that the lift for these IT expenses - essentially computer hardware and software maintenance and minor purchases – is designed to catch up on the deferral of upgrades and replacements from 2010/11. The Auditor General also reported that this item includes $50,000

for the licensing fee Microsoft Enterprise charges for the software the Office uses to operate its network; and $40,000 for a methodology that will allow the Office to do more with less in regard to staffing.

Capital budget

In regard to capital spending, the Deputy Chair inquired why the OAG has a three-year, rather than a four-year, computer replacement strategy. The Auditor General explained that audit teams, when out in clients' offices for extended periods of time, require good quality and secure equipment to access the major systems that are resident on the office servers in Victoria. In addition to the computer replacement strategy, the Office may use part of the $100,000 increase in the capital budget to purchase auditing methodology software to improve efficiency.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Finance Committee considers the Auditor General's request for a modest increase of 2.3 percent in next year's operating budget to be a reasonable one, and the amount proposed for capital spending to be manageable within the current fiscal context.

The Finance Committee recommends that:

- the annual appropriation for the operating expense of the Office of the Auditor General be $15,752,000 in 2011/12, and set at $15.937 million in 2012/13 and $16.324 million in 2013/14 for financial planning purposes;
- the Office of the Auditor General receive capital expenditures of $250,000 in each of the next three fiscal years.

Other Matters

Audit of accounts of Auditor General

The terms of reference, adopted by the House on May 27, 2010, assign to the Finance Committee the responsibility for the appointment of an auditor to audit the Auditor General's accounts, pursuant to section 23 of the *Auditor General Act*.

Five years ago, on December 16, 2005, a previous Finance Committee appointed Grant Thornton LLP of Victoria as the independent auditor of the financial statements and performance information of the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, starting in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006. This accounting firm was chosen through a competitive RFP process.

At the meeting on November 24, 2010, the current Finance Committee decided to reappoint Grant Thornton LLP of Victoria as the independent auditor for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011. Next year, the Committee plans to put in place in a timely way a process to invite proposals from accounting firms to conduct an annual audit of the accounts of the Office of the Auditor General in 2011/12 and beyond.

Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

> *"We could make do, but I'm not sure that it would be any more than a band-aid approach. While I know resources are limited, I think it would be a false investment. The reality is, in pure terms, that the number of Members has increased by 9 percent."* (Paul Fraser, QC, Conflict of Interest Commissioner for British Columbia)

Background

The Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner has a dual purpose: to serve and address the needs of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and Cabinet Ministers by providing an ethical framework to assist in reconciling their private interests and public duties; and to serve and inform the public. The appropriation for the Office is provided under Vote 3 of the annual *Estimates.* Last year, the Finance Committee recommended that the annual operating budget be $440,000 in each of the next three fiscal years.

Budget Proposal, 2011/12 – 2013/14

On November 23, 2010, the Finance Committee met to review the Office's budget proposal for the next three fiscal years. Representing the Office was Paul Fraser, QC, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

The Commissioner began his presentation by outlining the Office's mandate and current office structure. He reiterated the need for a digital information system when providing an account of the information requests the Office has processed in the past year. In his opening remarks, the Commissioner also emphasized the urgent need for a succession plan and additional staff.

For next year, the Commissioner requested an operating budget of $480,000, representing a net increase of $40,000 (or a 9% lift). He explained that the additional funds will be used mainly to increase the staff complement from 1.6 to 2 FTEs. With the extra position, the Commissioner anticipated that service delivery would improve and overtime costs reduced.

Committee Inquiry

The committee inquiry focused on the Office's staffing level and the disclosure statement. Members also asked questions about professional services (STOB 60), extension of the Office's jurisdiction to municipal politicians, and the two-year cooling-off period for BC office-holders.

Staffing level

The Finance Committee asked for clarification regarding the Office's request for an additional staff member. In his response, the Commissioner stressed that implementing the administrative succession plan is dependent on hiring additional junior staff, equivalent to 0.4 FTE.

The Commissioner then described the current staffing level as "rather a frail situation," because even a momentary sickness puts the Office in great difficulty trying to pick up the slack. Also, the Office is not in a position to hire people on an as-needed basis to handle the ebbs and flows of the workload, given the confidential and sensitive nature of its work. In the Commissioner's view, the current understaffing is impacting the quality of service delivery, particularly in terms of timeliness and completeness of information.

Disclosure statement

Another theme of the committee inquiry focused on the information-gathering protocols of the Office. Of particular concern was the paperwork required to process an MLA's confidential disclosure statement and the travel costs incurred to meet annually with the Commissioner to review this form. Some MLAs asked if it was possible to minimize the paperwork when there is little or no change in their material status from year to year, or when a material change had been captured previously by the "instant reporting" required by the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*.

In response, the Commissioner explained that the filing of a confidential disclosure statement and the mandatory follow-up meeting can act as a "cathartic moment" by providing a routine opportunity for MLAs to disclose and discuss any changes in their assets, liabilities and financial interests. With regard to "instant reporting", the Commissioner explained that the requirement to file a report of a material change within 30 days improves transparency and provides the public with the opportunity to monitor changes in each MLA's situation in the course of a year, once the form is filed with the Office of the Clerk.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Finance Committee is receptive to the Commissioner's plea for a modest increase in the operating budget to develop a slightly more robust staffing structure.

The Finance Committee recommends that:

- the annual appropriation for the operating expense of the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner be $480,000 in each of the next three fiscal years.

Elections BC

> *"All I'm trying to do is to find ways to save money. If I can save money by doing things more efficiently, effectively and with a greater degree of certainty for Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public, I think I have an obligation to do so."* (Craig James, Acting Chief Electoral Officer of British Columbia)

Background

Elections BC is the independent, non-partisan office of the Legislative Assembly responsible for conducting provincial general elections, by-elections and referendums and administering the initiative and recall processes, as detailed in provincial legislation. The appropriation for its operating expense and capital expenditures is provided for under Vote 4 of the annual *Estimates*.

Last year, the Finance Committee recommended that Elections BC's operating budget for ongoing core services be $7.74 million in each of the next three fiscal years. Concerning capital expenditures, the Committee recommended an allocation of $1.298 million in 2010/11, $1.164 million in 2011/12, and $140,000 in 2012/13.

Budget Proposal 2011/12 - 2013/14

On November 23, 2010, the Finance Committee met to review Elections BC's budget proposal for the next three fiscal years. Representing the Office were Craig James, Acting Chief Electoral Officer; Anton Boegman, Assistant Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations; Nola Western, Assistant Chief Electoral Officer, Funding and Disclosure; and Bob Jasperse, Director of Information Technology.

The Acting Chief Electoral Officer began the presentation by providing the Finance Committee with some context to position this year's budget proposal. He presented statistics to outline some of the work that has been done by Elections BC staff in this fiscal year, including updating the voters list and verifying the HST initiative petition.

Turning to the office's ongoing core services budget, the Acting Chief Electoral Officer explained that the increase of $394,000 (or a 5% lift) relates mainly to the proposal to move Elections BC headquarters to a new location in Victoria. He advised the Finance Committee that although this joint leasehold proposal will require an increase of $267,000 in building occupancy charges, the move to larger office space will save costs over the electoral cycle because the office will no longer have to lease more expensive temporary premises for electoral events. As well, the new landlord has agreed to provide $1.4 million in tenant improvements and to take responsibility for the existing lease at the current location.

On the capital budget, the Acting Chief Electoral Officer explained that the request for $1.439 million is for mainframe minicomputer hardware and software. The largest share ($750,000) is for completing the slow migration of the electoral information system; the remainder is for replacing the electoral geography system ($300,000) and investing in computer technology ($389,000).

The Acting Chief Electoral Officer then explained Elections BC's request for event-related funding totaling $30.848 million. He reported that the 2011 initiative vote will cost an estimated $29.692 million next year, assuming that it will be a single-day, ballot-box style vote requiring the same infrastructure to be set up across the province as in a provincial general election.

The budget for event-related funding also includes $175,000 for planning the 2013 general election and $981,000 for a residence-to-residence enumeration pilot. The Finance Committee learned that the *Election Act* requires a full enumeration to be conducted before the next provincial general election. Since Elections BC has not done an enumeration in over 20 years, a pilot project is essential to ensure the success of the methods used. However, the Acting Chief Electoral Officer's position is that this type of enumeration is not necessary in order to have a high quality voters list. In fact, there is considerable concern that such an approach will result in a voters list with lower coverage, as many people do not respond to door-to-door campaigns.

Finally, Elections BC requested contingency funding for two electoral events in the current fiscal year (2010/11) for which the organization has statutory spending authority: the HST initiative petition ($938,858) and the initiative vote planned for 2011 ($412,000).

Committee Inquiry

The committee inquiry focused on the 2011 initiative vote; the cost of a recall campaign; and the door-to-door enumeration pilot. Members also asked questions about the new leasehold proposal, the electoral geography system and the electoral information system.

2011 initiative vote

The Finance Committee asked how much notice Elections BC would require to conduct the 2011 initiative vote effectively, efficiently and economically. The Acting Chief Electoral Officer replied that six months is not a bad target, adding that there is an enormous amount of work that needs to be done in planning for an initiative vote, to be conducted along similar lines to a general election. He indicated that a mail-in ballot would be less time-consuming to organize and far less costly. Holding the initiative vote in conjunction with a provincial general election, like the two referendums on electoral reform, would cost approximately $1 million to administer.

In response to a related question, the Acting Chief Electoral Officer explained that most of the $2.652 million for technology costs associated with the initiative vote is for deployment of the information technology infrastructure out into the field to allow the district electoral officers to run the event. In addition, those funds are required to develop a unique module for the electoral information system to allow Elections BC to count the ballots for the initiative vote.

Recall campaign

Members also inquired what the estimated cost of a recall campaign would be. They learned that a by-election resulting from successful verification of a recall petition would probably cost about $1.1 million, whereas the process of fully verifying the signatures would cost around $620,000.

Another line of questioning focused on whether Elections BC would be able to absorb the costs for any potential recall initiatives, either in 2010/11 or 2011/12, since the office has not requested funding to cover such expenses. The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer, Funding and Disclosure explained that the office has not budgeted yet for any recall, but that it might need additional funding in the current fiscal year if the recent recall petition resulted in verification. Members also learned that if more than one recall campaign was going on at the same time, the cost for a separate signatory verification survey in each district is $135,000.

Enumeration pilot

Members inquired if the enumeration pilot was a prerequisite for an effective full residence-to-residence enumeration, which is mandated by the legislation and endorsed by both major political parties. The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Operations, replied that without being able to test procedures around door-to-door enumeration, both out in the field and at the back-end, the office would have challenges in administering a successful enumeration. In response to a follow-up question, he clarified that the door-to-door enumeration would be used as the basis for updating the voters list, and that names would be removed from this list if the office could not confirm them through the enumeration pilot. Committee members also learned that in the event the enumeration pilot was delayed to 2012/13, the timeline would be very tight, and also cost more.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Finance Committee approves the Leasehold Accommodation Proposal, submitted on November 18, because we believe the move to larger office space will result in some modest cost savings over the next 15 years. We also endorse Elections BC's request for additional funding to finance two extraordinary events: the HST initiative petition and 2011 initiative vote.

Regarding another event-funding request, the door-to-door enumeration pilot, most committee members are of the view that the pilot should proceed since a full enumeration is still a legislated requirement in advance of the 2013 provincial general election. At the same time most committee members would urge the Attorney General to consider the concerns expressed by the Acting Chief Electoral Officer, and his predecessor last year, about the necessity of conducting a costly full enumeration.

The Finance Committee recommends that:

- Elections BC be granted contingency funding of $1,350,858 for two electoral events in the current fiscal year (2010/11) for which the organization has statutory spending authority: HST initiative petition ($938,858) and 2011 initiative vote ($412,000);
- the total budget for the operating expense of Elections BC be $38,982,000 in 2011/12, with $8,134,000 allocated for ongoing core services and $30,848,000 for event-related funding requirements;
- the annual appropriation of Elections BC for ongoing core services be set at $8,134,000 in 2012/13 and in 2013/14 for financial planning purposes;
- the capital expenditures for Elections BC be $1,439,000 in 2011/12; $735,000 in 2012/13; and $250,000 in 2013/14.

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner; Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists

> *"I want to emphasize to the Committee that we are not asking for any additional funding for new FTEs. I've restructured my office to address current needs without the financial impact to my office. Essentially, I'm asking for a status-quo budget so that we are able to maintain our responsibilities under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Personal Information Protection Act and the Lobbyists Registration Act."* (Elizabeth Denham, Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia and Registrar of Lobbyists)

Background

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) is an oversight agency responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) and the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA). The smaller Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists is responsible for making information about lobbying activities publicly available and for enforcing the *Lobbyists Registration Act* (LRA).

The appropriation for these two offices' operating and capital expenditures is provided for in Vote 5 of the annual *Estimates*. Last year, the Finance Committee recommended an operating budget of $4.47 million in each of the following three years. The Finance Committee also recommended a $574,000 capital budget for 2009/10, and $45,000 in both 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Budget Submission, Fiscal Years 2011/12 - 2013/14

The Finance Committee met on November 23, 2010 to review the offices' budget submission for the next three fiscal years. In attendance were Elizabeth Denham, the new Information and Privacy Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists; Shelley Forrester, Executive Director of Corporate Services, Office of the Ombudsperson; Jim Burrows, A/Executive Director, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner; and Mary Carlson, Deputy Registrar of Lobbyists.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner began the presentation by explaining to the Finance Committee how her management style and the principles on which she bases her approach to oversight have influenced both the office priorities for the next three years and the budget submission. The OIPC's upcoming work will be based on regular communication and education, on the gradual adoption of proactive measures to improve access and privacy, and on a flexible approach to access and privacy rights that keeps pace with social and technological changes.

Turning to office mandate, the Commissioner described the three acts her office administers as important elements of a democratic and accountable system of government. The FIPPA provides citizens with the right to access government information and sets out how public bodies can collect, use and disclose personal information. The PIPA assures that private businesses balance their need

for information with individuals' rights to privacy, while the LRA facilitates an open and transparent lobbying process by registering and monitoring lobbyists.

The Commissioner proposed an increase of $436,000 (or a 9.75% lift) in the operating budget over the current fiscal year to achieve four key priorities. She informed the Finance Committee of the staffing changes undertaken to increase the efficiency and improve the ability of her "lean" offices to manage large caseloads. Included in these changes were the creation of a policy and legislative analysis unit to examine government policy and programs and the creation of a manager of communications and public education. The Commissioner requested an additional $25,000 in operational funding for these staffing adjustments, plus $12,000 in minor expenses.

An increase of $100,000 was also requested to contract information technology experts to address increasingly complex independent security investigations like Deloitte's examination of the BC Lottery Corporation.

Turning to the Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists (ORL), the Finance Committee learned that in the eight months since the ORL was established, new policies and procedures have been implemented, an extensive training period was undertaken and due to the Office's focus on outreach and education, 63 percent more lobbyists registered online than last year. In order to fulfil the full mandate of the OLR, the Commissioner requested $50,000 to contract part-time investigation assistants to carry out its compliance and enforcement responsibilities.

Next, the Commissioner explained that the greatest portion of new funding will be used to cover the costs associated with moving to the new Fort St. location. To meet lease obligations, an additional $65,000 is required for amortization and $184,000 to cover building occupancy costs.

The budget submission also included a request for earmarked funds to address the costs of judicial review processes. The Commissioner reported that at least $230,000 of the current $300,000 allocation will be spent on judicial reviews. As the number of judicial reviews has remained steady, the same amount of dedicated funding will again be necessary next year.

Finally, a capital budget of $45,000 is needed to upgrade information technology equipment.

Committee Inquiry

The committee inquiry focused on the status of judicial review litigation; recent privacy breach investigations; and savings arising from the move to shared accommodation at 947 Fort St., Victoria. One Member also asked about the fees associated with freedom-of-information requests.

Judicial review litigation

The Chair of the Finance Committee followed up on questions from last year regarding the number of judicial review proceedings initiated against the OIPC. The Commissioner reported that this year there were three new judicial reviews launched, all by public bodies. This brings the total to nine

judicial reviews brought before the Office of which six are public bodies. In response, the Chair expressed concern about this trend.

Privacy breach investigations

The Finance Committee requested clarification of the $100,000 portion of STOB 60 dedicated to specialized technical contracts. The Commissioner explained that technical expertise is needed to undertake high profile and/or large-scale privacy breaches, such as the recent independent security investigation into the BC Lottery Corporation online gaming privacy breach.

In a follow-up question, one committee member asked whether the OIPC needs its own funding for the contracts associated with in-depth investigations, or whether controlling the parameters and work associated with these contracts would be sufficient. The Commissioner explained that in order to maintain the Office's independence and public reputation, it is necessary that the Office have both the ability to hire and closely manage the contracts of information technology security expertise. The ability to contract this work is also important since it allows the Office flexibility to hire individuals with the specialized skill sets for each individual investigation.

New office location

Members also asked about the anticipated cost savings of moving into the Fort St. location. In response, the Executive Director of Corporate Services reported that anecdotal evidence suggests that sharing office accommodation and services has been successful for the four legislative offices. She added that the business case projected that over the term of the lease (15 years), there would be cost savings, and there is every reason to believe that this is still a possibility.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Finance Committee is pleased that the first budget submission presented by the new Information and Privacy Commissioner represents a balanced proposal showing a measure of restraint where possible. We are confident that the proposed restructuring of office resources will have desirable outcomes in the future.

The Finance Committee recommends that:

- the annual appropriation for the operating expense of the Office of Information and Privacy Commissioner be $4,906,000 in each of the next three fiscal years;
- the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be granted capital expenditures of $45,000 in each of the next three fiscal years.

Office of the Merit Commisssioner

"I consider, and I hope the Committee does as well, that this budget proposal will provide funds sufficient and necessary for my office to carry out an ambitious service plan for the coming and future years. We look forward to facing these challenges ahead." (Fiona Spencer, Merit Commissioner for the Province of British Columbia)

Background

The Office of the Merit Commissioner (OMC) is mandated to provide independent oversight and insight into merit-based hiring in the BC Public Service. The appropriation for the OMC is provided under Vote 6 of the annual *Estimates*. Last year, the Finance Committee recommended that the Office receive an annual operating budget of $965,000 in each of the next three fiscal years, and a capital budget of $152,000 in 2010/11 and $15,000 in both 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Budget Submission, Fiscal Years 2012-2014

On November 23, 2010, the Finance Committee met to review the OMC budget submission for the next three fiscal years. In attendance were: Fiona Spencer, the new Merit Commissioner and Shelley Forrester, Executive Director of Corporate Services, Office of the Ombudsperson.

The Merit Commissioner began the presentation by describing the work completed in the last year. The 2009 Merit Performance Audit included reviews of 302 appointments and revealed continued challenges with the application of the merit principle. The Office also completed a special audit of short-term temporary appointments less than seven months long and found that a significant number of these appointments extend beyond the original agreements. Other activities included completion of an examination of staffing reviews, the establishment of a new audit advisory committee and the revamping of the OMC website. By the end of this fiscal year, the OMC intends to finish audits of appointments made since September 2010, complete a special study of lateral transfers and address eight requests for staffing reviews received this year.

Turning to priorities for next year, the OMC will complete a merit performance audit to collect new baseline data. This audit will address the new hiring procedures adopted by the BC Public Service Agency and include a special stratification of appointments audited to allow a focus on occupational groups where non-merit-based hiring is a greater risk. The Office will also undertake special audits of auxiliary appointments and of temporary appointmenrs that extend beyond their initial seven-month agreement, and will conduct a study of the history of merit-based hiring practices in the BC Public Service.

With respect to next year's operating budget, the Merit Commissioner requested an increase of $97,000 (or a 10% lift) to cover amortization and building occupancy costs associated with the recent move to new office space at 947 Fort Street, Victoria. The budget submission also included a

request for $15,000 for capital expenditures, specifically for upgraded computer and telecommunications equipment.

Committee Inquiry

The committee inquiry focused on the challenge of enforcing the merit principle with respect to temporary positions and on the OMC mandate. Members also inquired about the capital budget.

Special audits

The results of the audit of temporary positions prompted Members to voice concerns about the impact the practice of extending temporary contracts may have on the application of the merit principle, especially in rural areas. In response to a question about the BC Public Service Agency, the Merit Commissioner provided follow-up information indicating that of the 228 temporary positions audited, four were within this Agency. All four positions lasted just over one year and none were part of the 17% of temporary appointments of particular concern.

The Merit Commissioner also explained that next year the OMC will conduct a special audit of auxiliary appointments (i.e., casual employment appointments where employees are called back to work as needed). Also, as part of her upcoming work, the Commissioner confirmed that she will be speaking with public sector unions to hear their opinions on merit-based hiring in BC.

Office mandate

Committee members also inquired about the Office's role in the completion of annual performance appraisals. The Commissioner explained that while the OMC does not have the jurisdiction to examine annual appraisals, these are often used alongside employee performance and development plans as evidence in the selection process and when reviewing appointments.

In response to questions about the Office's ability to ensure compliance, the Merit Commissioner reported that she has no enforcement powers. She can make recommendations, though, which are taken seriously by the Deputy Ministers who are asked to review appointments and make changes to hiring decisions. Members also noted that audit findings can be published in the annual report.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Finance Committee considers the first budget submitted by the new Merit Commissioner to be a reasonable and credible estimate and is pleased that it projects a slight downward trend in expenditures over the next three years.

The Finance Committee recommends that:

- the annual appropriation for the operating expense of the Office of the Merit Commissioner be $1,062,000 in 2011/12, and set at $1,044,000 in 2012/23 and $1,008,000 in 2013/14 for financial planning purposes;
- the Office of the Merit Commissioner receive capital expenditures of $15,000 in each of the next three fiscal years.

Office of the Ombudsperson

> *"I believe the Committee will find that this budget proposal is responsible and realistic. It focuses on maintaining the status-quo situation in our Office while acknowledging ongoing fiscal constraints."* (Kim Carter, Ombudsperson for the Province of British Columbia)

Background

The Office of the Ombudsperson has two primary roles. The first is to investigate complaints of administrative unfairness involving the 2500-plus public authorities in British Columbia. Its second role is to provide general oversight of the administrative actions of public authorities with a view to upholding the democratic principles of openness, transparency and accountability. The appropriation for the Office is provided under Vote 7 of the annual *Estimates.* Last year, the Finance Committee recommended that the annual operating budget be $4.945 million in each of the next three fiscal years, and that annual capital expenditures be $741,000 in 2010/11, and $75,000 in both 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Budget Submission, Fiscal Years 2011/12-2013/14

On November 24, 2010, the Finance Committee met to review the Office's budget submission for the next three fiscal years. Representing the Office were Kim Carter, Ombudsperson and Shelley Forrester, Executive Director of Corporate Services.

The Ombudsperson reported that 2009/10 was a challenging year for the Office due to the increasing number of enquiries, requests for assistance and complaints received. In 2009/10, there were 2,709 files assigned to early resolution, investigation or to the Office's file-awaiting-assignment list – the highest number since 1999. Some 2,646 files were closed – the highest number since 2002. This figure was achieved with fewer investigative positions than the Office had in either of those years.

In the absence of any increase in staffing, the Ombudsperson reported that effectively addressing the investigative workload continues to be the top priority for the Office and timely investigation of individual complaints remains one of the Office's greatest challenges. Two new initiatives are the early resolution program in the intake division and the file-awaiting-assignment process, a type of triage system to assist the managers of investigations (MoIs). In addition, the Office is in the middle of developing a new strategic plan focused on managing investigative file workloads, and has completed part 1 of the systemic review of seniors' care, with part 2 pending.

Looking forward, the Ombudsperson anticipates modest progress will be made in three other areas in fiscal 2011/12: development of good governance materials; outreach to underserved communities; and building partnerships/preventative ombudship. These three initiatives are consistent with the current integrated process of intake, referral, early resolution, investigation of individual complaints, systemic investigations, and education and outreach.

Turning to the budget submission, the Ombudsperson reported that the net increase in operating funds is $427,000 (or a 9% lift) for 2011/12. The request for additional resources includes $106,000 for funding to maintain a temporary position for one MoI assistant, salary/benefit increments and adjustments, and to continue the file-awaiting-assigment process for another year. Other increases covered $83,000 for amortization expense; $203,000 for building occupancy costs; and $35,000 to offset a reduction in external recoveries in 2011/12.

The Ombudsperson also requested that the Office's capital budget be restored to $75,000, reflecting 2009/10 and prior year levels.

Committee Inquiry

The committee inquiry focused on the Ombudsperson's working relationship with the Representative for Children and Youth; the office caseload; and self-governing professions. One Member also asked a specific question about the decline in external recoveries.

Relationship with other officers

Referencing the case summaries involving children and youth outlined in the *Annual Report 2009/10,* some Members inquired whether there is a duplication of services provided by the Ombudsperson and the Representative for Children and Youth. In reply, the Ombudsperson explained that the two offices have different but complementary roles. The Representative provides advocacy support for children and youth in the course of her Office's interactions with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, whereas the Office of the Ombudsperson responds impartially to complaints of administrative unfairness. On occasion, the two offices collaborate on projects of shared concern, such as the joint report on a child-centered approach to complaints resolution, which was released in January 2010.

Office caseload

Referrals

Members also inquired about the relationship the Office of the Ombudsperson has with MLAs' constituency offices. The Ombudsperson explained that referrals to and from constituency offices are not tracked by her Office, but constituency assistants do refer cases after they have tried to address their issue. This is particularly true with regards to workers' compensation cases.

WorkSafe BC

Members asked broad questions pertaining to the Ombudsperson's preventative outreach activities. They wondered if there was a formal mechanism in place for the Office to assist government organizations that seem to have a pattern of complaints, such as WorkSafe BC.

The Ombudsperson reported that due to numerous complaints, WorkSafe BC is always on the Office's list of significant authorities. In addition, approximately every ten years, the Office has engaged in a systemic review of the agency, resulting in some systemic changes to agency processes, including, in some cases, changes to regulations and legislation to make things fairer. The Ombudsperson anticipated that the interaction with WorkSafe BC would be ongoing.

Triage system

Members requested more information about the triage system used to allocate investigative files. The Ombudsperson explained that this initiative was developed in response to the growing caseload. With the new triage system, an intake officer determines if a file is accepted and then refers it to a manager of investigations. The case is examined by a manager and either identified as an emergency wherein an investigation commences immediately, or placed on the files-awaiting-assignment list to be assigned to an investigator when the opportunity presents. The assistant to the managers of investigations plays an important role by keeping in contact with individuals with open cases and updating the files based on any changes.

Self-governing professions

Some committee members inquired about the Office's jurisdiction with regard to self-governing professions. The Ombudsperson explained that the Office provides public oversight, focusing on how the self-governing professions handle the complaints that come to them about their own membership. She agreed that it is important work, noting that the public has rightful concerns when a profession's disciplinary body is made up of members of the same profession.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Finance Committee recognizes that the Ombudsperson is managing her office operations capably within the context of current restraints. We also appreciate receiving a well-presented submission that projects a slight downward trend in expenditures over the next three years.

The Finance Committee recommends that:

- the annual appropriation for the operating expense of the Office of the Ombudsperson be $5,372,000 in 2011/12, and set at $5,311,000 in 2012/13 and in 2013/14 for financial planning purposes;
- the Office of the Ombudsperson receive capital expenditures of $75,000 in each of the next three fiscal years.

Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner

"I'm happy to report that we are experiencing some relief in the amount of caseload per analyst. With two more additional positions, I think that will have a profound effect." (Stan Lowe, Police Complaint Commissioner for British Columbia)

Background

The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner (OPCC) deals with complaints against municipal police and members of policing units designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The appropriation for the Office's operating expense and capital expenditures is provided for in Vote 8 of the annual *Estimates*. Last year, the Finance Committee recommended that the OPCC operating budget be $2.457 million in each of the next three fiscal years, and that its capital budget be $325,000 in 2011/12 and $25,000 in both 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Contingency Funding 2010/11

At meetings on September 24 and October 6, 2010, the Finance Committee considered a request from the Police Complaint Commissioner for additional funding during the current fiscal year. Members learned that the Office was facing an increased workload and budget pressures due to the implementation of recent legislative changes to the *Police Act* regarding the police complaint process. In response, the Commissioner was seeking to hire more staff and to obtain a modest increase in the capital budget.

Committee Decision, October 6, 2010

After due deliberation, the Finance Committee agreed to recommend that the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner receive an additional $65,000 in operating expense and $20,000 in capital funding for the balance of the current fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

Budget Submission Fiscal Years 2011/12 - 2013/14

On November 23, 2010, the Finance Committee met to review the OPCC budget submission for the next three fiscal years. Representing the Office were Stan Lowe, Police Complaint Commissioner; Cynthia Dyck, Director of Planning and Information Management; Shelley Forrester, Director of Corporate Services, Office of the Ombudsperson; and Lanny Hubbard, Consultant.

The Police Complaint Commissioner began the presentation by explaining that the legislative amendments to the *Police Act* have significantly expanded the oversight powers and responsibilities of the OPCC, and enhanced accessibility of the police complaint process. This has resulted in a

significant increase in the number of complaints received, and he expects the number of registered complaints to double this year and remain at an elevated level in the long term.

The Commissioner then reported that the current budget forecast indicates that the Office's costs for adjudications, hearings and legal work are estimated to be approximately $320,000. This reflects a $220,000 increase over the level of dedicated funding in the current budget, which currently stands at $100,000. Through internal restructuring and prudent fiscal management, the Office has managed to partially offset these costs in the current fiscal year. For the balance, the Commissioner requested an additional $131,000 of dedicated funding in the current fiscal year.

For 2011/12, the submission proposes an operating budget of $3.024 million and a capital budget of $25,000. The former includes an increase of $220,000 in dedicated funding for adjudicated reviews, hearings and legal costs, which are expected to continue in fiscal 2012/13 and 2013/14. If this funding is not used, it will be returned to the consolidated revenue fund.

Next, the Commissioner sought clarification of the Committee's decision on contingency funding for 2011/12 – in particular, whether this amount was intended to reflect funding for one position or two additional positions.

Finally, the Commissioner drew the Finance Committee's attention to the nuts and bolts of the submission, at page 8, where two budget scenarios are presented and compared. Scenario 1 is based on one funded position ($130,000) and increases for adjudications, legal advice and space. Scenario 2 proposes two fully funded positions ($200,000) and increases for adjudications, legal advice and space. The difference of $70,000 occurs in the areas of salaries and professional services.

Committee Inquiry

The committee inquiry focused on the staffing level and the different avenues of adjudicative review. A specific question was also asked about the costs of the contemporaneous oversight system.

Staffing level

The Chair was perplexed about the request for clarification of the Finance Committee's October 6 contingency-funding decision, which he had explained to the Commissioner in a subsequent meeting. The Chair reiterated that the amount of $65,000 was for hiring two additional people in the balance of this fiscal year, with the positions to be funded going forward. His recollection was that the Committee had November 1 in mind as the start date for those two positions.

In response, the Commissioner stated that it was important for the Committee to know that to fund two full-time senior positions next year the additional expenditure is $200,000.

In a follow-up question, the Deputy Chair asked about the two budget scenarios, and the Commissioner clarified that the two additional positions are targeted for senior people that can hit

the ground running with respect to files, and reduce the immediate file-load. He added that as a result of internal restructuring, the staff complement of civilians now exceeds 50 percent.

Adjudicative review

The Chair also asked the Commissioner what would happen if the Office did not receive the $131,000 for the adjudicative expenses it is proposing to spend in the current fiscal year. He added that the Finance Committee expects each officer to manage within budget and so to a degree, this request for additional funding strays over that line. The Commissioner replied that there is a demonstrated need for such expenditure this current fiscal year, because of the creation of two new avenues of adjudicative review, and the ongoing circumstances of three public hearings transpiring this year, which are costly endeavours.

With recent amendments to the *Police Act,* there are now two additional avenues of adjudicative review and a reasonable set of expenses associated with conducting them. Retired judges are now involved under section 117, Appointment of new discipline authority, and, in some instances, counsel and submissions are available for review on the record. These avenues are an efficient, effective and less expensive way to address issues – apart from a public hearing, which continues to be an extremely expensive endeavour. So part of the $131,000 reflects what it costs, operationally, to have these avenues of adjudicative review, and the Commissioner reported that he cannot find any more efficiencies in the current budget to cover for the remaining $131,000 this fiscal year.

In response to a follow-up question from the Chair, the Commissioner also reported that those elevated costs arise because three of the five public hearings he has scheduled over the course of the past year are now coming to fruition. One is expected to commence in January, another in February and another likely in March. That $131,000 estimate represents the best estimate of what the Office expects the litigation costs to be – including fees for commission counsel as well as the adjudicator and the traditional scheduling staff that provide the infrastructure for the hearings as well as, in some instances, the site for which hearings take place. In this regard, the Commissioner announced that the new office space in Victoria has facilities for holding hearings, at least on the Island, and that's one cost-saving measure.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Finance Committee is prepared to approve the Commissioner's request for two additional FTEs. Effective November 1, 2010, an additional $65,000 was allocated pursuant to our October 6 decision. The annualized $156,000 for the new hires is to be included in the 2010/11 allocation.

However, the Finance Committee is not prepared to recommend an additional $131,000 in contingency funding for the current fiscal year to meet the costs of adjudicative review. Frankly, this request caught us by surprise since a specific proposal to deal with these cost pressures had not been presented at the two earlier meetings held to discuss 2010/11 contingency funding (September 24, October 6). In addition, we believe it is important for each statutory officer to manage office operations within the existing budget.

The Finance Committee recommends that:

- the annual appropriation for the operating expense of the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner be $2,796,000 in each of the next three fiscal years;
- the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner receive capital expenditures of $25,000 in each of the next three fiscal years.

Office of the Representative for Children and Youth

> *"It's quite an ambitious plan of oversight that we function under. We're very committed to and enjoy doing this work, but in order to make that work successful in the year ahead, we do require an increase."* (Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Representative for Children and Youth, Province of British Columbia)

Background

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (ORCY) supports children, youth, and families who need help in dealing with the child welfare system, and advocates on behalf of children and their families receiving designated services. The functions of the Representative and her office are set out in section 6 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act.*

The appropriation for the Office's operating expense and capital expenditures is provided for in Vote 9 of the annual *Estimates.* Last year, the Finance Committee recommended that the ORCY operating budget be $6.973 million in each of the next three fiscal years, and its capital budget be $30,000 in 2010/11, $130,000 in 2011/12, and $30,000 in 2012/13.

Budget Submission Fiscal 2011/12 - 2013/14

On November 24, 2010, the Finance Committee met to review the ORCY budget submission covering the next three fiscal years. In attendance were Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, the Representative for Children and Youth; Tanis McNally-Dawes, Manager, Finance and Facilities; Jeremy Berland, Deputy Representative for Children and Youth; John Greschner, Chief Investigator and Associate Deputy; and Andrew Robinson, Associate Deputy of Advocacy, Community, and Aboriginal Relations.

The Representative began the presentation by providing an overview of the mandate and core functions of the Office since its establishment in 2007. She went on to discuss recent and future work of the Office in the main program areas of investigations of critical injuries and child deaths, reviews of designated services, and advocacy.

On the topic of investigations of critical injuries and child deaths, the Representative discussed previous investigations and reports issued by the Office. She noted that investigations are multifaceted and complex, and can involve a significant volume of files and documents, interviews, research, and consultations with multi-disciplinary teams. The Committee learned that three investigations are currently underway and an additional 16 are on hold.

Next, the Representative referenced recent reviews of designated services, such as *Growing Up in B.C.*, a joint report with the Provincial Health Officer. She also reported that an update is due on the implementation of recommendations of the Hughes Review of BC's child protection system.

On advocacy, the Representative stated that since its creation, the Office has received 5,329 advocacy cases and that this type of work has continued to grow. During the first five months of the current fiscal year, the Office had 797 new advocacy cases initiated (or 132 cases a month).

Next, the Representative informed the Finance Committee that to complete the work carried over into the current fiscal year, the budget submission proposes an overall increase of $776,000, including a staffing budget of $539,000 to fund five new FTE positions. She explained that two positions would provide additional advocacy services and improve outreach to rural, remote, and special needs communities. The other three positions would strengthen the critical injury and death review team and its ability to conduct reviews and report in a timely fashion. Also included in the staffing budget was $48,000 to backfill maternity leaves among existing staff.

For capital asset acquisitions, the Representative's budget submission proposed an amount of $80,000 for 2011/12 and $30,000 in each of the following two fiscal years.

Committee Inquiry

The committee inquiry focused on the staffing level proposed in the budget submission and the issue of child poverty in BC. Specific questions were also asked about the advocacy caseload, the use of grants (STOB 77), and capital asset acquisitions (office space, equipment, and furniture).

Staffing level

Some committee members asked the Representative which positions in her staffing request were of the highest priority, and whether the proposal to hire five new FTEs could be reduced. They also suggested that the Representative's functions under section 6 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, particularly in relation to designated services, might still be carried out, even if some activities were scaled back.

In response, the Representative stated that the requested budget covers the minimum functions the Office is required to carry out under the Act. She noted that the Office's advocacy function "cannot continue without an influx of additional support," and that some critical injury and death reviews "will not be completed unless there are the FTEs to do it." The Representative also pointed out that the Act does not state how each of her functions be apportioned in the budget and that she exercises a great deal of professional judgment in determining what requires attention – with priority given to members of the public, particularly children, that need service.

Other questions were posed about whether some of the existing budget might be reallocated to cover new expenses. For example, Members questioned whether a part of the existing budget might be freed up by deferring plans for major research projects or consultations. The Representative was also asked if resources presently used for ministry oversight might become less necessary over time as a result of programming improvements.

The Representative reported that it would be difficult to postpone any major research projects since the Office does not engage in a lot of that activity. She also stated that engagement with the ministry around oversight and monitoring has been unsatisfactory and slow to progress, and that work still has to get done in this area.

Child poverty

Some Members asked whether resources would be better spent on preventative measures and programs to reduce the number of child deaths and injuries, such as a poverty reduction plan. Others referred to recent reports of a reduction in child poverty in BC and inquired how to identify and measure successes and areas for improvement in the system.

In response, the Representative noted that there is room for improvement in the area of child poverty and that a lack of services and staff in provincial agencies places greater pressure on her office. On the topic of poverty measures, the Representative noted that BC does not have its own measure, and that the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) data do not include Aboriginal poverty.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Finance Committee agrees that the work of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth is valuable and is sympathetic to the plea for an increase in the operating budget next year, despite the challenging times still ahead. We all consider some increase in the Office's staffing level to be appropriate, given the increase in the workload. Committee members part company, though, on the question of how many additional staff resources are needed for the Office to carry out its statutory mandate. Accordingly, the first recommendation was agreed to, on division.

The Finance Committee recommends that:

- the annual appropriation for the operating expense of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth be $7,317,000 in each of the next three fiscal years;
- the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth receive capital expenditures of $80,000 in 2011/12, $30,000 in 2012/13, and $30,000 in 2013/14.

Documents Submitted

Office of the Auditor General

2009/10 Annual Report and 2010/11 – 2012/13 Service Plan

Financial Statement Audit Coverage Plan for Fiscal Years 2011/2012 through 2013/2014

2011/12 Estimate of Resources, November 2010

Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Annual Report 2008-2009

Budget Proposal, 2011/12 – 2013/14, Presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, Legislative Assembly of BC, November, 2010

Elections BC

Annual Report 2009-2010

Service Plan 2010/11 – 2012/13

Budget Proposal 2011/12 – 2013/14

Leasehold Accommodation Proposal presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, November 18, 2010

Correspondence from Craig James, Acting Chief Electoral Officer to Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk Assistant and Acting Clerk of Committees, November 22, 2010

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

2009 – 2010 Annual Report

Service Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2014

Budget Submission Fiscal Years 2012 - 2014, Presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, Legislative Assembly of BC, November 23, 2010

Office of the Merit Commissioner

Upholding Fair Hiring in the BC Public Service, 2009/2010 Annual Report

Service Plan Fiscal Years 2011/12-2013/14

Budget Submission, Fiscal Years 2011/12-2013/14, Presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, Legislative Assembly of BC, November 23, 2010

Correspondence from Fiona Spencer, Merit Commissioner to Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk Assistant and Acting Clerk of Committees, November 29, 2010

Office of the Ombudsperson

Annual Report 2009/10

Service Plan Fiscal Years 2011/12-2013/14

Budget Submission Fiscal Years 2011/12 – 2013/14, Presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, Nov. 24, 2010

Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner

Correspondence from Stan T. Lowe, Police Complaint Commissioner to John Les, Chair, Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, August 25, 2010

Briefing Package Presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance & Government Services, Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, September 24, 2010

Supplemental Briefing Package Presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance & Government Services, Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, October 6, 2010

Correspondence from John Les, MLA, Chair and Doug Donaldson, MLA, Deputy Chair, Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to Hon. Colin Hansen, Minister of Finance, October 7, 2010

2009 Annual Report

Service Plan Fiscal Years 2012 – 2014

Budget Submission Fiscal Years 2011/12 – 2013/14

Office of the Representative for Children and Youth

Annual Report April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010

Service Plan 2011/12 to 2013/14

Budget Submission Fiscal 2011/12 – 2013/14, Presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, Legislative Assembly of B.C., November 24, 2010

Correspondence from John Greschner, Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk Assistant and Acting Clerk of Committees, November 22, 2010